

Gov’t could hold on to stake in dormant Coccochem

THE GOVERNMENT is re-viewing plans to sell shares in United Coconut Chemicals, Inc. (Coccochem) as global demand for coconut products rebounds, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Monday.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiú Laurel, Jr. said the government is now studying the possibility of holding on to its stake in the



company, which used to produce chemicals and oleo fats, in light of strong European demand for coconut products.

The government, through the Land Bank of the Philippines, had planned to auction in June around 682 million common shares in Coccochem, with the goal of raising at least P2.82 billion in proceeds.

The government is now evaluating whether holding on to its stake will result in greater value to the coconut industry.

The DA said the sale had also originally been intended to allow private investors the opportunity to revive or redevelop Coccochem.

According to its website, 92.85% of Coccochem is currently owned by the Coconut Industry

Investment Fund. The remaining 7.15% is owned by Germany’s Philholding, SA.

Established in 1981, Coccochem was once the largest producer of coconut chemicals and oleo fats in Southeast Asia.

However, in 2001, the non-implementation of Executive Order 259, which had required the use in detergents of some Coccochem products, disrupted the company’s operations.

Record coconut oil prices in the following decade further affected the company’s competitiveness relative to palm oil producers in Southeast Asia, leading to the plant’s shutdown in 2012.

In 2014, the company pivoted away from manufacturing to leasing land, renting warehouses and tank storage, distributing power, treating wastewater, operating piers, and renting residential property. — **Vonn Andrei E. Villamiel**

Career Opportunity in **TOTAL GAMEZONE XTREME INCORPORATED**

POSITION TITLE: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

JOB DESCRIPTION:

- * Identify and develop new business opportunities in foreign markets
- * Communicate with international clients using the assigned foreign language
- * Conduct sales presentations, negotiations, and contract discussions
- * Build and maintain strong relationships with overseas clients and partners
- * Prepare business proposals, quotations, and contracts
- * Coordinate with internal teams (operations, marketing, finance) to ensure smooth project execution
- * Conduct market research and competitor analysis in target regions

QUALIFICATION:

- * Fluency in one or more foreign languages (spoken and written)
- * Native or near-native proficiency preferred
- * Strong English communication skills
- * Excellent negotiation and persuasion skills
- * Strong interpersonal and cross-cultural communication abilities*
- * Sales-driven and results-oriented mindset
- * Ability to work independently and meet targets

Applications may be sent to: LAU, NIEL KEVIN LIM
Email: Corp.compliance@digijplus.com.ph

COMPANY / EMPLOYER	NAME OF FOREIGN NATIONAL INTENDING TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION
COMPANY NAME: TOTAL GAMEZONE XTREME INCORPORATED ADDRESS: 2nd FLOOR STARMALL EDSA COR SHAW BLVD, WACK-WACK GREENHILLS, MANDALUYONG CITY NATURE OF BUSINESS: AMUSEMENT AND RECREATION	NAME: HO GIET YAN ADDRESS: FAIRLANE RESIDENCES PASIG CITY NATIONALITY: MALAYSIAN INTENDED PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT: TWO (2) YEARS
TOTAL GAMEZONE XTREME INCORPORATED hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment- National Capital Region located at 967 Maligaya Street, Malate Manila	

Career Opportunity in **SENSE SUCCESS TECHNOLOGY INC.**

POSITION TITLE: BILINGUAL OPERATIONS SPECIALIST

JOB DESCRIPTION

A Bilingual Operations Specialist is responsible for managing, optimizing, and supporting the daily operations of a business or organization in a bilingual environment. This role ensures smooth communication between different teams, clients, and stakeholders who speak different languages. The position may involve coordinating workflows, handling customer service inquiries, supporting cross-functional teams, and translating or interpreting as needed. The bilingual skills are critical for managing operations in both languages efficiently.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Ability to translate complex documents and interpret technical language accurately.
- Strong knowledge of operational processes, logistics, and supply chain management.
- Ability to multitask, prioritize, and manage multiple projects simultaneously.
- Strong analytical skills with the ability to identify issues and provide practical solutions in both languages.
- Experience working in multicultural environments is a plus.
- Highly proficient in Mandarin, Malay and English languages

Applications may be sent to:
JHANELLE GIRASOL, HR OFFICER
sensesuccesstech@gmail.com

NAME OF FOREIGN NATIONAL INTENDING TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION	COMPANY / EMPLOYER
NAME: FANG, NAN ADDRESS: SALCEDO SQUARE L.P LEVISTE STREET MAKATI CITY NATIONALITY: CHINESE INTENDED PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT: TWO (2) YEARS	Company name: SENSE SUCCESS TECHNOLOGY INC.. Company address: GF 1158 CHINO ROCES AVE SAN ANTONIO CITY OF MAKATI Nature of business: OTHER INFORMATION SERVICE ACTIVITIES
SENSE SUCCESS TECHNOLOGY INC. hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment-National Capital Region located at 967 Maligaya Street, Malate, Manila.	

Career Opportunity in **AB LEISURE EXPONENT INC.**

POSITION TITLE: MANDARIN PRODUCT MANAGER

JOB DESCRIPTION

- * Define and execute product strategies and roadmaps aligned with company goals.
- * Collaborate with cross-functional teams to deliver high-quality products on time.
- * Act as the main point of contact for "Mandarin-speaking stakeholders, including suppliers, manufacturers, and regional offices.
- * Collect and analyze user feedback, market data, and business requirements.
- * Prioritize product features and enhancements using data-driven decision-making.
- * Monitor product performance and iterate based on feedback and analytics.

QUALIFICATION

- * Proficient in both Mandarin and English (spoken and written).
- * Excellent analytical, communication, and project management skills.
- * Strong understanding of UX/UI principles and customer-centric design.

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Corp.compliance@digijplus.com.ph

COMPANY / EMPLOYER	NAME OF FOREIGN NATIONAL INTENDING TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION
COMPANY NAME: AB LEISURE EXPONENT INC. ADDRESS: 5/F SM MEGAMALL BLDG D, J VARGAS WACK-WACK GREENHILLS, CITY OF MANDALUYONG NATURE OF BUSINESS: AMUSEMENT AND RECREATION	NAME: SONG, JIAWEN ADDRESS: TIME SQUARE BGC TAGUIG CITY NATIONALITY: CHINESE INTENDED PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT: TWO (2) YEARS
AB LEISURE EXPONENT INC. hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment-National Capital Region located at 967 Maligaya Street, Malate Manila	

Career Opportunity in **AB LEISURE EXPONENT INC.**

POSITION TITLE: MANDARIN COMMUNITY OPERATIONS

JOB DESCRIPTION

- * Manage and support Mandarin-speaking online communities through chat, email, social platforms, or in-app tools
- * Monitor community content to ensure compliance with platform policies and guidelines
- * Handle user inquiries, complaints, and escalations in Mandarin (Simplified or Traditional)
- * Analyze community feedback and trends to improve user experience
- * Assist in onboarding, education, and engagement initiatives for Mandarin users
- * Prepare reports on community performance, issues, and resolutions
- * Support operational tasks such as data labeling, content review, or quality checks (if applicable)

QUALIFICATION

- * Fluent in Mandarin Chinese (spoken and written)
- * Proficient in English (spoken and written)
- * Attention to detail
- * Time management and multitasking
- * Customer-first mindset
- * Confidentiality and professionalism

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Career Opportunity in **AB LEISURE EXPONENT INC.**

POSITION TITLE: MANDARIN UI DESIGNER (1 VACANCY)

JOB DESCRIPTION

- * Design and deliver user interface mockups, wireframes, and visual design specifications.
- * Collaborate closely with product managers, UX designers, and developers to ensure high-quality design execution.
- * Create intuitive, aesthetically pleasing UI designs that cater to both global and Mandarin-speaking user bases.
- * Participate in user research and usability testing to inform design decisions.
- * Adapt and localize UI elements for Mandarin-speaking regions while maintaining consistency with the global brand.
- * Ensure accessibility and usability across platforms and devices.
- * Stay updated with design trends and technologies relevant to both global and Chinese markets.

QUALIFICATION

- * Proficient in Mandarin (spoken and written) and English.
- * Proficiency in design tools such as Figma, Sketch, Adobe XD, Photoshop, and Illustrator.
- * Strong understanding of UI design principles, layout, typography, color theory, and responsive design.
- * Familiarity with front-end development concepts (HTML/CSS knowledge is a plus).
- * Ability to work independently and as part of a cross-functional, remote team.
- * Strong communication and time management skills.

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COMPANY NAME: AB LEISURE EXPONENT INC. ADDRESS: 5/F SM MEGAMALL BLDG D, J VARGAS WACK-WACK GREENHILLS, CITY OF MANDALUYONG NATURE OF BUSINESS: AMUSEMENT AND RECREATION	NAME: ZHENG, SHAOQIN ADDRESS: MCKINLEY WEST PARK TAGUIG CITY NATIONALITY: CHINESE INTENDED PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT: TWO (2) YEARS
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UK to supply microgrid, offshore wind technical aid

THE PHILIPPINES signed technical assistance agreements with the UK for its offshore wind and microgrid industries, the Department of Energy (DoE) said in a statement.

The three technical assistance projects are intended to support the Philippines’ transition to a low-carbon economy, the DoE said.

Energy Secretary Sharon S. Garin and Lloyd Cameron, economic and climate counsellor for the British Embassy in Manila, signed a letter of intent (LoI), formalizing collaboration under the UK Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions (UK PACT) Philippines Country Fund.

“This LoI reinforces our shared commitment to practical, outcomes-driven climate cooperation where technical rigor, transparent processes, and stronger institutional capacity translate into deliverable projects on the ground,” Ms. Garin said.



The fifth round of the GEA, which is set to be conducted next year, focuses on fixed-bottom offshore wind technology, with an installation target of 3.3 gigawatts and delivery set for 2028-2030.

Another project covers the development of a comprehensive data collection framework for the DoE’s priority microgrid sites to strengthen institutional capacity for microgrid planning and evidence-based decisions.

The third assistance package supports the technical validation and peer review of the initial results of the marine spatial planning process and tools for use in planning offshore wind development.

“These workstreams will help the DoE sharpen implementation discipline — from clearer documentation standards and review criteria for (offshore wind) auctions to better site data that supports transparent, competitive microgrid procurement,” Energy Undersecretary Rowena Cristina L. Guevara said.

“The objective is straightforward: improve readiness and confidence so that commitments convert into timely, reliable projects on the ground,” she added.

The UK PACT Philippines Country Fund support will run until March 2027, with the DoE and the British Embassy in Manila also organizing capacity-building activities, including workshops and training sessions for government officials and stakeholders. — **Shelden Joy Talavera**

OPINION

Taxpayers’ Christmas wish list for clarity on audits

This holiday season brings us more than gifts and surprises — it delivers a pause in Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) field audits and sparks hope for a tax system that’s clearer, smarter, and better for everyone.

On Nov. 24, the BIR issued Revenue Memorandum Circular (RMC) No. 107-2025 suspending all ongoing field audits and related field operations, including the issuance of Letters of Authority (LoAs), Mission Orders (MOs), and the examination and verification of taxpayers’ books of account, records, and other related transactions except for cases explicitly covered by the exceptions outlined in Section IV of the RMC. The suspension will stay in effect until the CIR issues an order lifting it.

While many taxpayers welcomed this as an early Christmas gift, questions quickly arose regarding the scope of the suspension and its exceptions. To clarify, the BIR released RMC No. 109-2025 on Dec. 12, providing detailed guidance.

ACTIVITIES COVERED BY THE SUSPENSION

The suspension applies to:

- Field activities under an LoA or MO involving contact or face-to-face meetings with taxpayers and on-site visits to taxpayers’ premises such as examining books, verifying records, and conducting audit-related onsite visits;
- Issuance of Subpoena Duces Tecum (SDT) related to audits or investigations except for cases under the stated exceptions;
- Conduct of Tax Mapping/Tax Compliance Verification Drive (TCVD), which involves verifying taxpayer compliance with basic administrative regulations and collecting data for potential LoA issuance.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE SUSPENSION

Certain activities remain active, including:

- Cases prescribing within six months from Nov. 24, including audits under an LoA covering multiple tax types where one is close to prescription;
- Processing and verification of estate tax returns, donor’s tax returns, capital gains tax returns, and withholding tax returns on the sale of real properties or shares of stock, together with the documentary stamp tax returns related thereto classified as ONETT cases;
- Requests for tax clearance from taxpayers due to retirement or business closure involving gross sales or receipts exceeding P1,000,000.00 or gross assets exceeding P3,000,000.00, requiring mandatory audits to confirm outstanding liabilities and ensure all obligations are settled before issuing a tax clearance;
- LoAs or MOs necessary for active criminal probes conducted by duly authorized enforcement units through verified intelligence reports, inter-agency referrals,

third-party data validation, or risk-scoring anomalies, requiring immediate audit action because of potential tax fraud;

- Claims for refund or Tax Credit Certificate (TCC) applications where the issuance of an LoA is required by law — such as for Income Tax, VAT, and Excise Tax — ensuring compliance with statutory reporting deadlines under the Tax Code, as amended;
- Other matters or concerns where deadlines have been imposed by law — excluding those mandated by administrative orders — as well as deadlines under the orders of the Commissioner.

ACTIVITIES THAT CONTINUE

In addition to the above exceptions, the BIR clarified that the following activities may continue and are not covered by the suspension:

- Responses to issued assessment notices served before the suspension, allowing taxpayers to pay deficiency taxes, file a reply or protest within the statutory deadline, or submit supporting documents for reinvestigation;
- Payments from settlements or agreements finalized before the suspension, proceeding without further approval provided they are supported by an Agreement Form (QF-06-01-2024) signed by the relevant BIR officers and the taxpayer or authorized representative prior to the effectivity of the RMC;
- Collection letters, warrants of distraint or levy, warrants of garnishment, seizure notices, and similar correspondences for enforcing the collection of delinquent accounts, including letters sent to third parties such as the LRA, Register of Deeds, or Local Assessor to verify property holdings of delinquent taxpayers, as these are part of the collection process after audits are finalized and are considered receivable accounts of the BIR — not part of the audit itself;
- Sending or serving reminder letters for open stop-filer cases and follow-ups for required schedules such as SLS, SLSPL, alphalist, and inventory list, ensuring compliance with filing and reporting requirements;
- Voluntary settlements of known deficiency taxes during the suspension by filing a Revenue Settlement Form and paying the agreed amount, with any payment schedule agreed upon before the suspension continuing without further approval.

The BIR’s audit suspension is a welcome breather for taxpayers — but it is not a blanket freeze. The suspension applies only to field operations. Taxpayers still need to file returns, pay taxes due, and follow regular

compliance schedules. Understanding these nuances ensures that taxpayers stay on the nice list and avoid surprises in the new year.

TAXPAYERS’ EXPECTATIONS POST-SUSPENSION

Taxpayers are looking forward to measures that will make audits more efficient, transparent, and balanced. Many hope for a more risk-based approach, where audit efforts focus on areas or profiles that present higher compliance risks. At present, some taxpayers have experienced receiving multiple LoAs in close succession, creating operational challenges. Beyond managing audits, taxpayers also need sufficient time to review and improve their internal systems, processes, and controls based on observations from previous audits. A risk-based approach would help ensure that resources are used effectively and minimize unnecessary disruption for those with a strong compliance record. This could also help streamline audit processes, allow taxpayers the breathing room to strengthen compliance, and reduce these repetitive instances.

Taxpayers also value clarity and consistency in audit findings. There is a growing expectation for assessments to be well-supported and aligned with applicable tax rules and regulations, avoiding figures that may appear excessive. Strengthening internal review and validation processes can help ensure accuracy and fairness, fostering greater confidence in the audit system. These improvements would not only ease compliance but also promote a more collaborative relationship between taxpayers and the BIR moving forward.

As we step into the new year, clarity and collaboration remain key to a stronger tax environment. The audit suspension offers a timely pause, but it also opens the door for meaningful improvements in audit processes — balancing enforcement with fairness and efficiency. By embracing risk-based strategies and reinforcing quality controls, the BIR can continue to build trust and transparency, while taxpayers can look forward to a system that supports compliance without unnecessary strain. After all, the best gift for both sides is a tax framework that works better for everyone.

Let’s Talk Tax is a weekly newspaper column of P&A Grant Thornton that aims to keep the public informed of various developments in taxation. This article is not intended to be a substitute for competent professional advice.

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VIA MARIE ANGELA M. VALDEZ is an associate from the Tax Advisory & Compliance practice area of P&A Grant Thornton, the Philippine member firm of Grant Thornton International Ltd. pagranthornton@ph.gt.com

